

HELLO AGAIN

VOL. 25 NO. 3

MAY - JUN. 1994

A PERSONAL NOTE: Please make sure you put enough postage on your mail. Four sheets of paper in an envelope will be one ounce. If you put in 5 sheets, it will cost 52 cents...If your envelope is 8 1/2 by 11 and it is under one ounce, you must add 10 cents to your postage. Also, if you want an answer to your letter, no matter whom you write to, **please include a SASE.**

RADIO IS ALIVE AND WELL: A One-hour radio special, **Berlin Calling**, based on the book by John Carver Edwards, was broadcast from WUGA-FM in Athens, Georgia on May 17. It was free to public radio stations and was fed to Channels 5 and 6 on satellite. For information and copies call David Bryant at (706) 542-6735.

ULTIMATE LOG: Copies are still available for \$52. The cost includes the first supplement and P & H. The first supplement alone is available for \$9.50. That also includes P & H.

CONVENTION 1994: Dates are October 20 - 22 at the Holiday Inn North, Newark, New Jersey. Dave Zwengler, 6 Lake Ave. #5B, East Brunswick, NJ 08816 is looking for panelists for America's Town Meeting that will be held on Friday afternoon at our convention. If you are interested, let him know. The Topic will be, "How Can We Bring the Golden Age of Radio into the Platinum World of the 90's." Some subtopics will be: Why TV, Why Not Radio...TV violence vs. radio morals...500 channels: Can we in radio use a TV channel for the promotion of our world of Radio as we know it?...several others.

Friends of Old-Time Radio Script Contest

The first annual original script writing contest is now open. We would like an original 30 minute script which must be based on any of the great radio programs of the past, such as The Shadow, Jack Benny, etc.

The script can have the characters originating in their original era and time or you can update the time to today. The script must have all music and sound cues as well as all the spoken material. Try to arrange it in script form so it doesn't have to be retyped.

The prize for the best script will be \$150 and will have its live performance at our convention on Thursday evening after dinner (October 20th, 1994). We would like you to attend our convention to participate but it is not mandatory. You can direct it if you wish. There will be some rehearsal time. Scripts must be submitted by September 3, 1994. Send to Dave Zwengler, 6 Lake Ave. #5B, East Brunswick, NJ 08816. A distinguished panel of old-time radio buffs will pick the winning script. They must be very readable. All are eligible so please spread the word.

So far we have received 7 scripts.

Will all clubs with newsletters print the above in order to give everyone a chance?

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED: **Airwaves**, 3rd/4th quarter, 1993. Articles about and interviews with Ezra Stone, Lester Lanin, Durward Kirby, Jim Harmon, Bob Hite, Charles Flynn, June Foray, Frankie Laine (Recently wrote a book called "That Lucky Old Son.")...**Radio Recall**, Mar - Apr; articles about Bill Jacobson's popular class on OTR...Edward R. Murrow. **Jack French**, editor of Radio Recall, is asking for messages from other organizations to help celebrate the 10th anniversary of The Metropolitan Washington OTR Club. Send to Jack at 5137 Richardson Dr., Fairfax, VA 22032...**Old Time Radio Digest**, Jan - Feb; articles on "How To

Tell Good OTR Sound From Bad" by Bob Burnham; Henry Morgan...Mar – Apr; articles on Richard Diamond (Dick Powell); "Information and Help to the OTR Collector" by Terry Salomonson...May – Jun; article on Ezra Stone; reprint of article on Bob Hope...**RLL On the Air**, Apr; Articles on Ezra Stone; William Conrad; Joseph Cotten...**Nostalgia Digest**, Apr – May; articles on National Barn Dance; Propaganda on the Home Front; Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey...Jun – Jul; articles on D-Day radio coverage; reminiscing by Mary Fran Godwin Purse, daughter of Earl Godwin...**SPERDVAC Radiogram**, April; articles on Ezra Stone, Macdonald Carey; also reprints of guidelines for submitting scripts to The Whistler and Suspense.. **Jolson Journal**, Spring, 1994; more Jolson articles and information... **RadioActive**, March; Radio Active is a newsletter for radio Top 40 survey collectors. It is published 3 times a year. It also contains information on air checks of DeeJay programs of the 50's and 60's, early pioneering stations and the actual business end of the networks. Also there is information on meanings of call letters. For more information and a sample issue, send a SASE to Dennis Burns, 10248 Lola Court, Concord Twp., OH 44077...**Daily Sentinel**, May – Jun; articles on Radio shows based on movies; article on WNYC, the only station owned by a major American City (New York) and its future; article on Bank Street College Radio (WNYE-FM; 91.5) and its dramatic and music programs for grades K – 9. For information contact Irsin Gonshak, 610 W 112 St., New York, NY 10025 (212) 875-4531...**Thrilling Days of Yesteryear**; articles on Frank Sinatra, Ezra Stone (interview), Professor Quiz, Reprint of article on Chamber Music Society of Lower Basin Street...**Eddie Cantor Newsletter**; more articles and information about Eddie Cantor...**Illustrated Press**, May; article on Arthur Godfrey...**Radio Collectors of America** Newsletter, May; 21-page article on Tarzan on the radio by Robert Jennings... **Ronald Staley**, 5632 Van Nuys Blvd., Ste. 368, Van Nuys, CA 91401 (818) 989-2137 is introducing Vintage Radio Logue, a quarterly on-cassette magazine designed specifically for those persons who wish to hear about radio, the way it was, and those who wish to just get a glimpse of the past. Each cassette will contain interviews, information and broadcasts. Cost is \$35 a year.

BOOKS: If you wish to order "That Lucky Old Son," the autobiography of Frankie Laine, send \$37 to Frankie Laine, Box 6910, San Diego, CA 92166...As many of you know, Greenwood Publishing Group has published many bio-bibliographies in the performing arts. James Robert Parish is the series editor. About 50 have been published. For a list or to order call 1-800-225-5800. Several I recently received were **Agnes Moorehead** by Lynn Kear, \$45; **Al Jolson** by James Fisher, \$59.95; **Helen Hayes** by Donn Murphy and Stephen Moore, \$49.95; **Ginger Rogers** by Jocelyn Faris, \$59.95; **Joan Fontaine** by Marsha Lynn Beeman, \$59.95...Received **One More River** by Fran Striker, completed by Frank Striker, Jr., 165 Singley Ave., Runnemede, NJ 08078. It is a true account of the use of camels for military purposes, especially an expedition from San Antonio to Southern California in 1857. Cost is \$50, Hard Cover commemorative edition and signed; \$16 for soft cover.

CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS: Apparently, the **Illinois OTR Club** is still active and well. For information, write Nancy Warner, 10 South 540 County Line Rd., Hinsdale, IL 60521...The 1994 **Eddie Cantor Society Convention** will be held June 3 – 5 in New York City. For information and cost, write Sheila Riddle, Box 312, Mount Gay, WV 25637 (304) 752-8521...The National Lum & Abner Society's annual convention is June 25 at Best Western Inn, Mena, AR. For information write Tim Hollis, Rt 3, Box 110, Dora, AL 35062...**The Collector's Radio Network** is a new project started by Bob Burnham and Tom Eurich, Jr. One of the goals of this potential broadcast network is to provide a source of information for collectors. There are over 100 million collectors of everything from cars to OTR to comic books to weather vanes. For information send a SASE to Bob Burnham, Box 2645, Livonia, MI 48151; FAX and Voice Mail (313) 277-3095...The Walter Reade Theater in Lincoln Center, New York, is presenting a film retrospective, Hawkshaws, Shamuses, Gumshoes and Dicks: Private Eyes in Movies from May 13 to June 2. Ray Schnitzer conceived and organized this program. A panel discussion

took place on May 15th. If you interested in the schedule of films contact the box office at 212-875-5600...The **Metropolitan Washington Old Time Radio club** is celebrating its 10th anniversary. Congratulations and continued success...On March 28 at the Cafe 44 in New York, Bill Nadel directed an all star cast in a re-creation of Sherlock Holmes. It was a fund raiser for the **AFTRA/Heller Memorial Foundation**. Included in the cast were Arthur Anderson, Jackson Beck, Lon Clark, Larry Robinson, Margot Stevenson and Whit Vernon. Barney Beck, who is celebrating his 50th year in AFTRA, provided the sound effects.

LOGS: Rob Imes sent me a **Hall of Fantasy** log which I will make available to you for \$1 plus a SASE...**Jack French** has a Canadian Log for "**Men in Scarlet**." It was a juvenile adventure show on CBC and ran from Mar 29, 1943 through May 6, 1948 for 410 performances. For the log write Jack French at 5137 Richardson Dr., Fairfax, VA 22032...More of Ray Stanich's logs are appearing thanks to **Ellen Robinson**. Ellen and I go back to the early 70's. Ray would send Ellen drafts and Ellen would try to fill in missing information from the network stations in the Syracuse, NY area. Available are **The Magic Key** (Sketchy); \$.50...**The Railroad Hour** (newly retyped); \$1...**Rogers of the Gazette** (Most); \$.50.. **Luke Slaughter of Tombstone**; \$.50...**Frontier Gentleman**; \$.50...**Mr. Chameleon** (Most); \$1.. **Adventures of the Thin Man** (Sketchy); \$.50...For a complete **Family Theater Log** from 2/13/47 -1/31/62 write **Jerry Austin**, 4312 Pearl Ct., Cypress, CA 90630...**Bill Anthony**, 1684 Beryl Dr., Pittsburgh, PA 15227 (412) 882-6135 has a new **Theater Guild On the Air Log**. It is chronological and lists every show with author and cast. He is selling it for \$10.

CATALOGS AND NEW SHOWS: **BRC Productions** (Bob Burnham), Box 2645, Livonia, MI 48151 has a summer supplement including Broadway's My Beat, New First Nighter Programs, Danger Dr. Danfield, Hallmark Playhouse, new Mysterious Traveler, Red Ryder and many others...I Mentioned in the last issue that **John Cooper**, Rt 1 Box 371, Clarksburg, WV 26301 has 500 shows on cassette to trade. He has **2000** shows on cassette to trade...Received new catalog from **Rainy Day Books** (Frank Bequaert), Box 775, Fitzwilliam, NH 03447 (603) 585-3448. This April catalog contains their largest selection to date of books and paper relating to radio broadcasts. Rainy Day books also has a Bibliography of 325 Radio biographies and Books on Radio shows for \$5; \$4 with any purchase from the catalog...Received new supplements from **Great American Radio** (Garry Kramer), Box 504, Genesee, MI 48437 and **Vintage Radio** (Andy Blatt), 42 Bowling Green, Staten Island, NY 10314. Both had a wide variety of shows at reasonable prices.

NEW FRIENDS AND RETURNEES: **Thomas Keefe**, Dept. of History, St. Joseph's University, Philadelphia, PA 19131...**Chuck Burnes**, Box 2486, Anaheim, CA 92814 did a couple of kid roles on "WRBY's Theater of the Air" in Waterbury, CT in the mid 40's. Does anyone have a copy of that show?...**George Paddock**, 1219 N. 19th St., Superior, WI 54880...**Ralph Garlick**, 3880 Silsby, Cleveland, OH 44111. George provides OTR twice a week for the Cleveland Radio Reading Service, a closed circuit radio station for the visually handicapped. George has been doing this since 1979 and has prepared some interesting programs. If you have similar interests or would like to know some of the original ideas he has, contact George...**Bob Barbagelott**, 2568 Western Ave. RD#, Bldg 7 #4, Altamont, NY 12009 is looking for Lum and Abner, F M & M, ILAM, YTJD, Chandu, Whisperer...**Daniel Klevan**, 383 Kinston Ave. #271, Brooklyn, NY 11213 is looking for tapes of "You Are There"...**Robert Boyer**, 16 Mount Washington Dr., Colorado springs, CO 80906 wants cassettes or reel copies of radio programs featuring pipe organ music, mainly theater pipe organ including Jesse Crawford, Helen Crawford, E. Power Biggs, Charles Courboin and Virgil Fox. Interested in entire programs of this instrument...**Richard Dillman**, 161 Western Ave., Brookville, PA 15825...**Paul Brennecke**, 4049 Lundale Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55409...**Ed Pienkos**, 26 Greenbriar Rd., Montgomery, IL 60538 is working on a Great Gildersleeve log and would welcome contact with

anyone with similar interests or a large GG collection. He is also trying to collect every GG show in existence. Ed is also very interested in Fibber McGee & Molly...**Armand Kunz**, 27465 Southfield Rd., Lathrup Village, MI 48076...**Richard Veit**, 214 Valley View, Waco, TX 76706...**Dan Clemson**, 604 N. Market St., Mechanicsburg, PA 17055 is working on a Bio-Discography of the Mills Brothers and would welcome information, especially their appearances on radio from 12/28 - 8/29 on WLW in Cincinnati and 9/29/29 - 12/31 on CBS...**David McGirr**, Open Air Sta Box 2145, St. Pete, FL 33731...**Lance Hunt**, 17 Graham Ave., St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada L2N 5L1.

OLD FRIENDS: **Francis Rylance**, 1088A Chiefs Dr., Robin AFB, GA 31098 is looking for an audio cassette rewriter and sources of Old-time radio trivia...**Carl Amari and Radio Spirits** were the subjects of an article in The Daily Herald, a Chicago area paper. According to the article, Radio Spirits, founded by Carl who is 30, grossed \$1.6 million in sales in 1993....**Tod Irzyk**, 1036 Victoria St., New Bedford, MA 02745 looking for copies of Ethel and Albert...**Jack French** appeared briefly in the Dutch Schultz Treasure segment of Unsolved Mysteries which was aired on April 27...**Dave Shury**, Box 1388, Battleford, Saskatchewan, Canada S0M 0E0 would like to hear from collectors of Canadian OTR shows. Dave is president of the Saskatchewan Baseball Hall of Fame...**Russ Pfister**, 192 S. Gould Rd., Columbus, OH 43209 is trying to locate a copy of an episode of APR's show Good Evening from 1988 which featured William Conrad re-creating his one-man performance of Waxwork from Suspense...**Ronald Lewis**, 108 W 30th Ave., Eugene, OR 97405 is looking for logs of The Whistler and Mysterious Traveler. I am not aware of these logs...**Allan Ropchan**, 8923-84 Ave., Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6C 1E3 is looking for "Strangest of All" and will trade for or buy reels.

IN FOND MEMORY: **David Ormont**, Feb 2, 79; actor, radio announcer and writer (Lucky Strike Hit Parade)...**Janet Chandler**, Mar 16, 78; actress; did some radio in New York in the 30's and 40's...**Danny Barker**, Mar 13, 85; virtuoso banjo player and guitarist. Was featured on radio show "This is Jazz" in 1947...**Wendell Niles**, Mar 28, 89; veteran radio and television announcer (Bob Hope, Burns and Allen, Milton Berle)...**Betty Furness**, Apr 2, 78; gained fame by selling Westinghouse refrigerators on television. On radio she was one of several Anns on Casey, Crime Photographer...**Ginny Simms**, Apr 4, 81; big band singer, movie and radio personality; had her own radio show in various formats from 1941 - 1951.. **Vincent Pelletier**, Feb 24, 85; radio announcer (Carnation Contented Hour, First Night Program, Edgar Bergen)...**Matthew Harlib**, Mar 26, 68; radio, film and TV producer and director (Arthur Godfrey)...**Bob McGonagle**, Mar 25, 64; acted on Let's Pretend...**Lawrence Spivak**, Mar 10, 93; Originator of Meet the Press...**Peter Hackes**, Apr 17, 69; NBC correspondent, originally with CBS from 1955 - 1958...**Ken Carson**, Apr 7, 79; actor and singer with the Sons of the Pioneers...**John McLaim**, Apr 16, 76; character actor in films and TV. Did some radio in the 1950's...**Christopher Lynch**, Apr 15, 73; Irish tenor (Voice of Firestone)...**Fred Kilian**, Apr 25, 83; TV Pioneer and producer of radio shows (Terry and the Pirates, Stump the Authors).. **Henry Morgan**, May 19, 79; caustic radio and television wit. Had various radio shows from 1940 - 1950, often with Arnold Stang.

Write if you get work; and hang by your thumbs

JAY HICKERSON, Box 4321, Hamden, CT 06514
(203) 248-2887; FAX (203) 281-1322

Blind Twins Share a Special Vision of Radio's Past

■ **Broadcasting:** John and Larry Gassman, 39, have turned their passion for the old-time drama of the airwaves into a weekly show on KPCC.

By MIKE CARLSON
TIMES STAFF WRITER

John and Larry Gassman have never seen a picture of Superman. They can't. Born more than two months premature, their optic nerves never matured enough to allow them to ever see anything.

So they listen instead. Since childhood, the 39-year-old identical twins have been hooked on radio dramas, listening to shows that allow them to use their imaginations to follow the red-caped Man of Steel as he leaped tall buildings in a single bound.

"One of our earliest memories is hearing a radio drama when we were 5 or 6," said John, who along with his brother has developed a zealous determination to never let the recordings of old-time radio dramas such as "Superman," "Gunsmoke" and "The Green Hornet" vanish from the airwaves.

Their collection of nearly 20,000 reel-to-reel tapes of vintage shows lines the walls and spreads onto the floor of the family room-turned-studio, from which the Gassmans produce a weekly show of classic radio drama for KPCC-FM (89.3) in Pasadena.

Continued from 3

equipment to preserve the discs," which are very fragile.

KPCC is a public radio station broadcasting from Pasadena City College, so the brothers do their show for free. They get by on Social Security and a little money they make from singing with a local barber-shop quartet.

The Gassmans started playing records at Rio Hondo College in the early 1970s. After earning degrees in communications from Cal Poly Pomona, they got their chance to fill the radio drama slot at KPCC in 1980 after an announcer moved to Arizona. They've been spinning stacks of old records ever since.



JACQUIE HARLAN / For The Times

John, left, and Larry Gassman say radio dramas let them use their imaginations.

dena.

John walks slowly among the stacks of tapes on the floor, some recently deposited on the carpet of their Whittier home by the Northridge earthquake. He puts on headphones as he nears a table covered in reel-to-reel tape machines.

"Oh great, now I can't hear where I'm

going," he mumbles, reaching his hands out.

"Well, it's never stopped you before," said Larry, who is already seated in front of his microphone. Their fingers dance deftly across the dials of their tape recorders and then the two launch into the introduction to their show, "Same Time, Same Channel."

"They're remarkable guys, and their knowledge and love of radio as an art form is just very special," said KPCC Program and News Director Larry Mantle, who has worked with the Gassmans for a decade.

"[The Gassmans] appreciate a lot of things that made radio exciting before market-driven companies got into it," Mantle said. "So much of what we hear today on radio is commercialized and dull."

Not that radio drama is making it big-time. Arbitron ratings show that they attract about 15,000 listeners during their two-hour broadcasts. By comparison, KLSX's Howard Stern pulls in about 1.2 million listeners each morning.

(heard Sundays from 5 to 7 p.m.).

"Got a lot of variety on the show this week," John says. He adds that the herniated disc that was pinching the nerves in Larry's neck has been removed.

"But we've found you can't play the disc [on a turntable] with acupuncture needles after all," John says. "So stop calling."

"You've got a lot of nerve mentioning that," Larry quips.

The show is timed using a talking clock that quietly rattles off 10-second increments in a canned digital voice out of range of the microphones, and their talking watches have a crowing-rooster alarm to stop them from running over.

The brothers still make their tapes on reel-to-reel recorders.

"It's harder to use the new tape recorders," Larry says. "We've always had to do everything by feel and sound, and the new buttons don't make any noise."

Most of their collection is taped from records donated by radio drama stars, such as the late Vincent Price, John says. The 16-inch discs captured about 15 minutes of performance on each side of an aluminum-based record. During World War II, such records were made on glass to save the metal for the war effort.

"We put ads in the papers when we started collecting, and word spread from word-of-mouth that we wanted the recordings," John says. "People are usually glad to give [the records] to us because we have the turntables to play them and the

Please see TWINS, 4

The Gassmans continued to break new ground when they covered the Rose Parade for KPCC from 1987 to 1989. Their broadcasts, which won an advertising industry award, were the result of tours of the floats in which they were allowed to clamber all over the petal-covered creations and literally feel their sizes, shapes and textures.

"We were really popular because we described all the floats in detail, and nobody does that any more on TV. But we never got to drive one. I always wish we'd gotten to drive a float—we asked but we couldn't because of insurance," John said.

Radio Enthusiasts of Puget Sound

REPS RADIO SHOWCASE II

A Great OTR Experience in SEATTLE -JUNE 24-25, 1994

FIRST TIME GUESTS

Lon Clark (*Nick Carter*); Ray Erlenborn (*Sound effects artist*); Gale Gordon (*Our Miss Brooks*,++++); Jack Kruschen (*Multitudes of shows*); Gale Storm Masterson (*My Little Margie*); Tyler McVey (*Active character actor*); Norma Jean Nilsson (*Father Knows Best*); Willard Waterman (*The Great Gildersleeve*); Rhoda Williams (*Father Knows Best*)

RETURNING GUESTS

John Archer (*The Shadow*); Frank Buxton (*The Big Broadcast*); Stewart Conway (*Sound effects*); Jeanette Cullison (*Valiant Lady*); Merrill Mael (*Uncle Fletcher*); Anne Whitfield Phillips (*Phil Harris/Alice Faye*); David Ossman (*Actor, director, writer*); Doug Young (*Veteran character actor*)

We Can't Wait...But, We'll Have To!

Having one Conference under our belt, the REPS folks are rarin' to go on number II. Details are taking shape, with our goal being to surpass the superb experience we all had last time. We invite you to come to one of the most beautiful cities in America...at one of the most beautiful times of the year! Re-creations (*The Great Gildersleeve* and *Nick Carter, Master Detective*), panels and an intimate, first class setting. You'll get to know our great guests.

SHOWCASE LOCATION

Overlake Hospital
Conference Center
1035 116th Ave. NE
Bellevue, WA 98004



HOTEL INFORMATION

West Coast-Bellevue
625 116th Ave. NE
Bellevue, WA 98004
800-445-9444
Each room is \$70 per
night... including tax.



THE UNSEEN AUDIENCE By Webster

880 AM KIXI RADIO and TUXEDO JUNCTION TO SPONSOR BIG BAND DANCE AND OLD TIME RADIO EVENING

On Friday evening, KIXI, TUXEDO JUNCTION ORCHESTRA AND REPS will intermingle great old big band music with an enthusiastic look at the Golden Age of Radio. Special OTR guests listed above will be share throughout the evening. KIXI Program Director Mike Webb, and Bill Sheehan of Tuxedo Junction have announced that Radio Showcase attendees will be able to listen and/or dance and most of all to enjoy...as they wish, all for FREE See registration below.

DON'T YOU EITHER! BE SURE TO RESERVE YOUR PLACE NOW.

Information/Questions? Gary Litwin 206-643-7641

REPS RADIO SHOWCASE II REGISTRATION FORM

Name _____ Telephone () _____ Date _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Are you a REPS member? Y___N___ If not, would you like membership information? Y___N___

If you require special meals, please describe _____

Would you like to have tourist type information on Seattle/Washington State Y___N___

I/We wish to attend as described below:

_____ Complete day, including evening banquet, program and 2 OTR re-creations \$49 each _____

_____ Day program only, (not including banquet) 1 OTR re-creation \$21 each _____

_____ Evening program only, banquet and 1 OTR re-creation \$33 each _____

TOTAL \$ _____

_____ I need _____ FREE ticket(s) to the Friday night Big Band/OTR event



Waterman as the Great Gildersleeve, with Marylee Robb and Walter Tetley as niece and nephew Marjorie and Leroy.

PLEASE SEND CHECKS OR MONEY ORDERS, PAYABLE TO REPS, TO:
REPS RADIO SHOWCASE II c/o Lloyd Jones, 6166 92nd Ave. SE, Mercer Island, WA 98040